The Business of being a Friend

By Bertha Condé

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The Business of Being a Friend

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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TO

THE GIRL FRIENDS WHO HAVE

SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCE IN FRIENDSHIP WITH ME

AND TO ALL OTHER GIRLS

WHO HAVE HAD OR LONG TO HAVE

ADVENTURES IN FRIENDSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

An essay on the stupendous and fascinating experiences of friendship usually takes one of three forms. Following Plato or Swedenborg, one may try to scale its mystic heights. Failing this, one may try to reduce it to simpler terms by medical or sociological analysis; — result: the insipid or nauseous mess just now so annoyingly familiar.

But if one prefers a third plan one may offer advice as to the beauties and difficulties to be met with on the road which friends (and would-be friends) are ever traveling. Miss Condé has chosen this method and has written a book which is sensible and practical from start to finish, because it rests firmly on her own well-pondered experience. Priv-

ileged by her Young Women's Christian Association work to share many friendships and to watch many more, she tells us briefly what she has learned.

No one will find anything sensational in the book. Its object is neither to excite nor to thrill, and in its warm human tone there is no tinge of sentimentality. She prefers to sketch for us with an honest, homelike touch the tests of friendship, its cost, its limits, and the endless path on which it travels. The dangers upon this path — such as "satellitism" and the tendency to "drive a friend tandem" — she has marked so clearly by her telling phrases that no reader can run into them unwarned.

Failures of mutuality in friendship, and the steep but practicable path by which to climb out of them, are described in this book by one who knows exactly

what she is writing about and is neither foolishly hopeful nor tamely pessimistic as to the situation.

Those who grow uneasy at any "intrusion of religion into private life" may be disturbed by Miss Condé's refusal to root friendship anywhere save in God. But she is not trying to please everybody. She wishes to serve girls by concentrating in these brief chapters her rich experience of girls' problems in friendship. I find the attempt successful. So I believe will her readers.

Richard C. Cabot

The Business of Being a Friend

I

THE NORMAL LIFE ONE OF FRIENDSHIP

What is the best a friend can be
To any soul, to you or me?
Not only shelter, comfort, rest —
Inmost refreshment unexpressed:
Not only a beloved guide
To tread life's labyrinth at our side,
Or with love's touch lead on before;
Though these be much, there is yet more.
The best friend is an atmosphere
Warm with all inspiration dear,
Wherein we breathe the large free breath
Of life that hath no taint of death.
Our friend is an unconscious part
Of every true beat of our heart;
A strength, a growth, whence we derive
God's health, that keeps the world alive.

LUCY LARCOM

The Business of Being a Friend

I

The Normal Life one of Friendship

"Friendship," a girl once said, "is for nine tenths of us the most interesting experience in life; but you surely have to learn to mind your P's and Q's." There are others who will agree with this. Every girl has thought much about friendship and adventured into it. The mere mention of the subject touches a sensitive spot, and a host of memories come trooping along, some sad, some glad, others puzzling or tender, and most of them too intimate to be told. For most girls friendship is an alluring path on which they set forth without many guide-posts. There are sharp turns in

the road and unexpected discoveries; the vista of blue hills and sunshine alternates with the "tulgy wood"; there are hilly places and crossroads, and long stretches of plain — in fact, it is all so varied that it cannot be described accurately until one has gone on a long distance.

All of these changing experiences may be true of a girl's life with one friend; and when she finds out that, in the whole world of people, no two are alike, her task of finding solid principles that will guide and interpret her experience in friendship is by no means an easy one. It depends largely upon the temperament of a girl whether she is willing to go on without guidance, or wait for safe counsel and the chance for a wider observation of human nature.

There is a hunger in the heart of every girl to be known and understood.

It comes with the consciousness of individuality and the "I am I" feeling that grips her in her early youth. She becomes aware of other personalities who touch her life at different points and lead her into fuller self-expression. She soon begins to see that her personality can be realized only as it responds to the stimulus of other personalities, just as the human brain grows only by the interchange of thought with other brains. In this way the joys and fascinations of friendships begin to hold her, and if she is a normal, red-blooded girl, she develops a keen zest for discovering people and making friends.

As soon as friends are found, they become responsibilities, and the average girl enters upon the inevitable experience of adjusting herself to them and finding herself in these new relationships.

The rub comes just here, and success in being a friend depends upon the discernment, common sense, and guiding principles at one's command.

There are some girls reading these pages who have not had this experience for one of two reasons: they are either so timid by nature that they dare not venture out toward others and so starve their lives; or they may be going through a period when they fancy they are independent of people and want to be let alone. Sooner or later, however, the elemental, human need for friends asserts itself and they see their mistake. They begin to realize that the true richness of life is measured by the number of individuals that we have come to know and understand; friendly persons who are friendly because they appreciate being known and understood.

The Normal Life one of Friendship

The other day I went to one of my favorite haunts in the country, several miles from the railroad, to see a woman who is exceptionally rich in friends. My friend has lived on a farm all her life and scarcely goes away for a day. She is in the seventies, and has never failed to take advantage of every human interest that came her way. In addition to the comforts of the farm and good books and magazines, no one ever comes through that country road who is not interesting to her, no one to whom she does not minister. Food and counsel, comfort and good fellowship are given freely to all who come. Farming has been her avocation, but her interest in all kinds of persons has been her great vocation. She has had many sorrows, but they have been met with a brave, unselfish spirit. Every one feels in her an understanding

of his need because she has not feared pain, or difficulties, but has been ready to face them herself with courage and humbleness of heart, and has been willing also to go through them with her friends. Her simple country home has met human needs for years; if children were orphaned, or if friends have needed a place in which to rest or to die, or have been needing counsel or courage, all have been received with joy, unmistakable hospitality, and simple sincerity.

As a result, she is one of the truly great women of her time. Authors, business men, care-worn society women, children and college students, rich or poor, have worn the path to her door where the latchstring is always out. And as she sits beside the old fireplace, in the sunset of her life, she is joined night after night by friends from near and far who

cannot forego the joy of her comradeship.

Another friend, of equal opportunities and more wealth and education, sits lonely in her home. Housekeeping, music, books, and a devoted husband make the full circle of her life. She has always been too busy to trouble about others. Very few people "appealed" to her, she said. Now there is a consciousness of limitation that she cannot explain, but one which saddens her. "Can't you tell me," she asked wistfully, "why everybody seems to honor and love Mrs. Greenwood? I'd give all I possess to have just one tenth of the influence and real greatness she has."

Thanks be, the secret of having friends does not hang on all we possess or hope to possess, but on a friendly spirit which each of us may acquire, and which brings

so much joy that nothing else in this world is of greater value. Even that wretched little beggar Kim, in Mr. Kipling's story, has a dignity and serenity which no outward conditions can ruffle, merely because in his spirit he is "Kim —the little friend of all the world."

II

FINDING OURSELVES IN FRIENDSHIP

We see the noble afar off and they repel us ; why should we intrude ? Late — very late, — we perceive that no arrangements, no introductions, no consuetudes or habits of society would be of any avail to establish us in such relations with them as we desire, — but solely the uprise of nature in us to the same degree it is in them ; then shall we meet as water with water ; and if we should not meet them then, we shall not want them, for we are already they. In the last analysis, love is only the reflection of a man's own worthiness from other men.

EMERSON

II

Finding Ourselves in Friendship

We all need many friends and many kinds of friends. Some of them should be strong in ways in which we are weak, for so shall we be kept both courageous and humble. We need friends, too, who call out our strength and experience and depend upon us. The best in us is often brought out by self-sacrifice for the sake of helping a friend.

There are few of us who are willing to pay the price of ideal friendship, for we are prone to look first to the gain that may come to *us*. When we discover that we find ourselves only to the degree in which we lose ourselves, we have the secret and begin really to live.

It is easy for some girls to form friend-

ships, for they are ready to go more than halfway, and by temperament they are open and accessible and naturally demonstrative. But there are others who seem unable to find themselves because they are shut up within reserved natures, and the more they love, the more silent and speechless they become. The appeal of friendship does not limber them, but locks them up. They suffer from exaggerated self-consciousness, and, as a girl once put it, "I have often crossed the street to avoid meeting some one whom I specially admired because I could not bear the embarrassment of my awkward self in her presence. I seemed fairly knock-kneed and pigeon-toed." This often comes from a lack of social experience which will wear off in time as one gets used to meeting people, or it may be due to a feeling that one has nothing

worth while to contribute to a friendship and so it is not safe to venture. Such girls are the very ones who need the help of friendship the most. They will find themselves in it when they begin to seek some other girls who are more timid and self-conscious than they are and learn to share their common experiences. Sooner or later they will find some self-respecting point of contact with the others whom they idealize at a distance.

The business of being a friend is one of the greatest of human responsibilities, for unselfish friendship is the surest way of interpreting God to others and unlocking the resources in human lives that were meant to be released for service. We pass by numbers of people in whose lives there are priceless hidden treasures. Their lips are inarticulate until some one, who has the selfless spirit of that Great

Friend who discerned, not only the faults, but the fibers of strength and great promise in people, helps them to find themselves in friendship.

The one seeking such a relationship will find that friendship is born in an atmosphere of trust and unselfishness. The ideal conditions for the beginnings of friendship are created through some vision of God's workmanship, revealed in some human relationship where it is easy to be one's real self, and to allow one's true impulses to unfold simply and naturally; and out of a host of friendly acquaintances our friendships will emerge.

There will be mutual giving and taking, the sharing of experience and wisdom, until we find ourselves a part of every friend and every friend a part of us. If we could gather together all the friends that have had a part in making us, it

would be very easy for a stranger to tell what kind of persons we are; for my life as a person is the sum of what my spirit has wrought in me, plus what it has wrought in all my friends and what my friends have wrought in me.

Our life, therefore, is rounded out by the inherent gifts of other lives; and as the needs of our spirit are many, so we need many kinds of friends. It is also true that each of us has a dominant note, something that represents the special gift we have to make to other people. One friend may be a constant reminder to us of unselfishness because all the conditions of his life have caused it to grow unusually. Another may have an artist's eye through which the outer world becomes a new discovery to us. Another may have a capacity for understanding people's hearts that guides us into deeper

sympathy. Still another may embody the soul of courtesy, or a resolute spirit of square dealing, the spirit of poetry, a logical mind, or a sense of humor. By each of these friends we are spurred to our best, to a symmetrical growth in spirit, and find our varied needs met. Thus, no one friend can completely satisfy us.

Right here we are often foolish in our idealism. We have a friend who seems to meet all our need at the time; but after a while, perhaps years, other needs arise in us and we expect the impossible, that this one shall be able to satisfy us in all ways. We may even be inclined to feel that we have grown away from this friend. Many a friendship has been wrecked because too much was expected of it — divinity itself. No one expects the violinist in the orchestra to render a symphony

himself, and yet without his violin the harmony would be incomplete. In the same way each of us is essential, but our ability to satisfy other lives is limited. What we really need is to avail ourselves also of the special gifts that other friends express through their personalities. In this way we grow to appreciate the marvelous capacity of the human spirit, and to know that it can never be fully satisfied on earth.

III

HOW FRIENDS COME

My friends have come to me unsought.
The great God gave them to me.

EMERSON

III

How Friends come

As a rule, our friends come to us in one of three ways: through an affinity of spirit, a common work, or a mutual purpose.

There are temperamental reasons why certain people appeal to us more than others. It is a law of life. As iron toward the magnet, we find ourselves drawn to certain personalities whom we seem to understand instinctively and who influence us irresistibly. "Love at first sight" is a reality, but it is only the first step in friendship. The attraction which we feel may not have the power to hold us permanently, unless it is reinforced by a long period of friendship during which we discover gradually common habits of life,

the same intellectual point of view, and much that is alike in our tastes and our inner spiritual standards. It is this that makes for permanent rest and strength and understanding. No amount of magnetic attraction can satisfy us, although all our deepest relations have this element in them; but like the color and soft light in the cathedral, it only adds to the beauty when there are foundations and walls and the dedication to a holy purpose. Many girls mistake the thrill of meeting a kindred spirit for friendship which can only be the result of a slow process, and commit themselves before they are assured that lasting qualities are really there. They wake up oftentimes too late, and friendship is said to have failed when it has not even come into being.

Two college girl friends of mine re-

cently told me of their engagements to be married. Both said that they had known instinctively from the first time they met the men that they would be willing to marry them. They had both fallen in love at first sight. One girl was so sure, that she became engaged in a week and was married in three weeks. Since then her friends have been holding their breath and waiting to see whether the marriage would be succeeded by friendship, or whether the discerning lines of the poet would prove true here:—

> "I used him for a friend
> Before I ever knew him for a friend;
> 'T was better, 't was worse also, afterward
> We came so close, we saw our differences
> Too intimately." [1]

The other was also sure of her heart, but waited for a year of friendly comradeship to pass, to test congeniality of tastes

[1] Mrs. E. B. Browning, *Aurora Leigh*.

and purposes, before finally accepting her lover. From the records of other unions, my second friend stands a better chance for a life of happiness and deepening friendship than the first girl. It is not love at first sight that would be responsible, but the failure to realize that an affinity of flesh and spirit is merely the beginning, and that all the wisdom and teaching and experience of friendship are yet to follow.

For this reason, the privilege of working together is usually a more satisfactory way of trying out possible friendships. Daily life with others, in the home, school, or college, business or church work, brings to light hidden treasures of personality that help and hold us. Ideals are unconsciously lived out and we have a chance to see our wearing qualities. Then, some day, this comrade appears in

a new light. The personality is radiant and idealized before us, and we exclaim with the joy of a new discovery, "My friend!"

There are also rare friends that come to us through a mutual recognition of a burning purpose. Time and space have little to do with such relationships. The sea and the years may roll between; there will be no difference; when these two friends meet again, their relationship will be deeper and will seem never to have been interrupted. A great common purpose dominates the life of both so completely that other interests and differences seem trivial in comparison. Usually a common religious devotion will lift friendship to this level, and two friends, no matter how far separated, will grow in love and sympathy and nearness to each other.

IV

THE MARKS OF A LASTING FRIENDSHIP

Love is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent. She is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance. Love never fails.

Words of St. Paul (*Weymouth translation*)

IV

The Marks of a Lasting Friendship

Every friendship that lasts is built of certain durable materials. The first of these is truthfulness. If I cannot look into the eyes of my friend and speak out always the truthful thought and feeling with the simplicity of a little child, there can be no real friendship between us. Friends who have to be "handled" or "managed," or with whom we take refuge in fencing or posing, do not know the love that casts out fear. "Trust is the first requisite for making a friend," says Hugh Black,—"faithfulness is the first requisite for keeping him"; and trust and faithfulness cannot endure without truthfulness.

Surely the greatest of all blessings is

a truthful friend, for all of us are liable to fall into the snare of self-deception. It takes heroic courage to face one's real self daily. Some one has said that "The best evidence of moral blindness is to be able to look at one's self and still remain satisfied." In our desire to be satisfied, we tend to follow the line of least resistance and become blind to our real selves; and a truth-speaking friend, who loves unselfishly, is the best cure for such self-deception. Poor, indeed, is that girl who has never let such a friend come close to her!

Close upon truthfulness comes loyalty, but not the blind kind that the small boy experienced for his mother, when he shouted to his doubting playmate, "I tell you it 's so; because my mother says so; and if my mother says it's so, it's so, even if it ain't so." The loyalty that I

have to my friend must be of two kinds: the kind that strives to interpret the best in my friend to others, and the kind that brings shelter to my friend; a loyalty in which rest and security are found.

It is often said of women that we are not loyal to one another, that we betray one another readily if it serves our purpose; that we love blindly and without discernment, or not at all. This is probably the reason why the friendships of so many girls are not lasting, and proves that we need to guard against the first germ of disloyalty. To do this we need to see more clearly what loyalty really is. It involves the deliberate choice of a cause which calls out a devotion that is more than the devotion to an individual. "You can love an individual," Professor Royce writes, "but you can be loyal only to a

tie that binds you and others into some sort of unity, and loyal to individuals only through the tie. . . . Loyal lovers, for instance, are loyal not merely to one another as separate individuals, but to their love, to their union, which is something more than either of them, or even than both of them viewed as distinct individuals." [1] If there has been any tie between my friend and me that has once been recognized and loyally accepted, I must be true to it in order to preserve my moral self-respect, unless loyalty to this tie involves disloyalty to a greater cause. We need to mark well the beginnings of friendship and see to it that it is built upon some relation to which we can be instinctively loyal, and then guard it, by idealizing the relationship and by being willing to pay the cost of friendship in

[1] Josiah Royce, *Philosophy of Loyalty*, p. 20.

daily service and sacrifice. We always value highly that friend who holds every human relationship reverently and never takes advantage of it.

Respect for reserve and reticence in a friend is essential to a lasting relationship. The people that we tire of quickly are those who speedily reveal all that there is to be revealed. All their family and personal secrets have been babbled freely and they wear their hearts on their sleeves. We draw away from such friends because we are sure that they will have little reverence for our hearts since they show so little for their own.

We are conscious, too, that this lack of reverence indicates a shallow life. The lure of friendship lies in the undiscovered depths, which we know are there but may not explore. They are the inner sanctuary of the spirit.

"Each heart, mysterious even to itself,
Must live its inner life in solitude";

and the greater the spirit, the more spacious the sanctuary. The inner thoughts and motives, the communion of the spirit with its God, can never be uttered to any friend, although we may catch fleeting glimpses unconsciously revealed. We love best those whose reserves are far greater than their self-revelations. It is those friends who beckon us on with the sense of a great adventure.

The closer we get to people in the right way, the more we shall reverence them and the more we will guard against taking liberties with them. A college girl once confided in me, "I used to admire Ruth and expected that we should be good friends, but she's borrowed so many postage stamps and never paid for them that I have decided I don't want any

one for a friend who takes such liberties."

One day two friends were seated in the room of one of them and the question was asked, "Why are n't you and Jane good friends?" Just at that moment, without the courtesy of knocking, the door was opened and the friend in question walked in. There was no need for any other answer. It seemed a little thing, perhaps, but revealed a lack of fine instinct that would make one distrust the possibility of friendship. No matter how close and intimate we may be with our friends, we should never presume in our familiarity. We cannot afford to break down for a moment those instincts of courtesy and reserve that are the hallmark of every friendship worth having.

One ought never to claim any self-revelation as a right, but to respect lovingly

everything about our friends that they hold in reserve. All self-revelation and intimacy in friendship must be spontaneous and natural. It must come like the opening of a flower in the sunshine and cannot be forced. Inquisitiveness kills trust. If there is confidence and trustfulness there will be a deeper sharing of life day by day, and the "secret riches in hidden places" will keep us from becoming *blasé* in our friendship.

We have sore need, too, of that quiet confidence that allows time to work out the fullness of our relationships. It may take months and years before the trust and faithfulness is rewarded by a love that "never faileth." In the intensity of our youth we often plunge headlong, insisting that we shall have the perfect flower of friendship at once, even if it has to be a forced, hothouse growth; and,

alas, it never comes to perfection. The cultivation of a friendship is like my annual experience with hyacinth bulbs in my windows. It is hard to have patience and wait during the weeks when they are in a dark place where the roots can grow. I am so eager to put them in the sunny window and see the green leaves and flower stem appear. But I know that the flower never would come if it were forced before the long process of root-growing is over.

If a friendship is to be lasting, it will have to be dealt with in unreserved honesty. A close friendship exerts such a power over us, even unconsciously, that we must be on our guard lest under the spell of it we are sometimes tempted to lower our ideals. We are all human and imperfect, and each of us needs to be pulled up to a higher level at times by

some faithful friend. This takes courage. We must be on such terms with our friends that, even at the risk of hurting or being misunderstood, we will speak out our convictions fearlessly. Sometimes in our eagerness to see our friends rise to their best, we discourage them and make them self-conscious by our continuously critical spirit until we stifle that quiet trust and peace of heart that are the very essence of friendship. Fearlessness is only right when it is embedded in an understanding sympathy and loving confidence in the spirit of our friend.

"Why are you college fellows so devoted to Miss Brown?" a friend once asked a young sophomore; "there are so many other girls more attractive than she is." "You would n't ask if you knew her," he replied; "she 's such a good comrade and gives us a square deal and

always expects the impossible of us, so that it keeps us hustling to measure up to her ideals. I tell you, it will be a mighty big man who will qualify to win her. She's not like an ordinary girl. She doesn't hold herself cheap." And yet there had been times in this girl's college life when it would have been much easier to follow the crowd than to maintain her ideals. As she once confided in a friend, "It's terribly hard to resist the appeal of 'Oh, come on, all the girls do it'; but you know I have to live with myself and I couldn't sleep nights if I couldn't square myself with my conscience." To love so well that one cannot see any lowering of a standard in one's friend without sincerely trying to hold him true is the highest service of friendship.

V

THE TESTS OF FRIENDSHIP

The world has not learned friendship's meaning yet;
Little indeed is all thou hast to give,
If it is but thine own; but bid me live
Largeness of life beyond thee, and my debt
Eternally uncanceled will remain,
And we, though strangers, have not met in vain.
. . . . . .
For friendship is not ours to lock away
In stifling chests, for fear of thievish hands;
It is a generous sun-warmth, that expands
The soul it flows through, turning night to day;
Light given to us to give abroad again,
Till none in unblessed darkness shall remain.

A friend, — it is another name for God,
Whose love inspires all love, is all in all:
Profane it not, lest lowest shame befall!
Worship no idol, whether star or clod!
Nor think that any friend is truly thine,
Save as life's closest link with Love Divine.

LUCY LARCOM

V

The Tests of Friendship

As a friendship grows and gains influence over me, I need to test it carefully and see whether it comes up to certain standards. It is bound to exert power over my life, and I must be sure that I know what kind of power it is exerting, and what the effect is upon character. God has given us a spirit to be held in trust for Him, and He will hold us responsible for the influences that we allow to play upon it. That spirit must be influenced by people in some way, for we were not made to live by ourselves; but the power is given us to decide in what way we will thus be influenced.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The first question that every girl needs to ask herself is this: "Do my friends hold me to my best, and do I hold my friends to their best?" Or, to be concrete, "Do my friends ever interfere with my work and the doing of my duty?"

A while ago a beautiful girl gave up her college life in the middle of the year because she could not do her work. No one could understand why her mental powers seemed so inadequate. Finally, she acknowledged to a friend that it was not because she was stupid, but because a friend had come into her life who was so absorbing that she could think of nothing else. The thought of this friend destroyed her power of concentration on her work in the classroom and during study hours. She could not refuse the

distractions of tramps and visits, even though work was pressing. So the joy of this friendship robbed her of self-respect, handicapped her future, and was a thoroughly demoralizing influence. She might well have profited by Mrs. Browning's words: —

> "Beloved, let us love so well
> Our work shall still be better for our love,
> And still our love be sweeter for our work,
> And both commended for the sake of each
> By all true workers and true lovers born."

We need moral courage to put duty first and to insist that our relationships shall contribute strength and not weakness to us. A young man put this startling question to his mother one evening while he was having a good-night talk with her after a social affair: "Mother, why is it that so many of the girls are no longer divinities, but temptations to us fellows?" One had not far to go for

the reason. These girls had lost the fine sense of responsibility for helping their friends to be true to the highest standards and were thoughtlessly weakening the powers of moral resistance and self-control in their boy friends.

It is a serious enough thing to be responsible for the expressions of our own life, but it is a still more serious matter to be the cause of stumbling to others, making it difficult for them to hold to the highest standards. We should have the courage to cut away from any friendship that keeps us from being better able to do our work and realize our ideals.

NON-EXCLUSIVENESS

A second way of testing our friendships is by asking whether we are so near to our friends that we see them only as related to us and not in the setting of

their social relationships to their other friends. Do we demand their exclusive attention or give ourselves exclusively to them without a care for the relations that we have or ought to have with other lives?

A dear little Quaker girl was meeting this desire for exclusive proprietary rights in a friend of hers. Mary was urging her claims on Rachel's time: "I can't do it," said Rachel; "thee knows my sisters need me." "But I love thee so, I must have thee go with me to-day," pleaded Mary. Thereupon the discerning Rachel answers, "Yes, I know thee loves me, but the trouble is, thee strangles me with thy love." And yet no life need be strangled, if only we recognize the inability of any one of us fully to satisfy another, and with a willing heart allow the love that "seeketh not its own" to control us.

My love is not what it should be if I do not rejoice in every bit of opportunity for larger life and experience that comes to my friend from relationships with others who may be able to contribute far more than I ever can. It may mean a big tussle with self to gird up one's life to this standard. If it does, let us fight it out, and conquer through the strength that God will surely give. Nothing short of meeting this test will give us the crown of true, lasting friendship.

GUARDING CONFIDENCES

One of the commonest ways in which girls fail one another in their friendships is through a lack of fine feeling in guarding what their friends have intrusted to them. There are seemingly so few who can resist the temptation to use the unguarded confidences of friendship for the

sake of a good story, or because of a desire to divulge "inside information" in order to sustain some good point. I have, or rather had, a friend who betrayed a confidence, "to clear up a certain question," she said. When I remonstrated with her for her indiscretion, she replied, "I always expect my friends to have enough confidence in me to trust my judgment in such matters." She represents a type that we have all discovered at times, whose sense of loyalty and whose trustworthiness are so embryonic that they offer but little guarantee for lasting friendship.

THE DESIRE TO USURP

There is yet another searching test that we need to apply to all of our friendships. It centers around the thought of idolatry. There is something in us that

not only desires to adore, but wants also to be adored; and sometimes in the absorbing joy of love we are tempted to give to our friends the place that God alone should have in our hearts, and to usurp for ourselves God's place in the heart of our friend. The root of it all is selfishness, which always ends in sorrow. Permanent happiness is only possible when in all things God occupies "the foremost place" in the heart.

There are many friendships that cannot stand this test, especially if one of the two friends is temperamentally and physically much stronger than the other, so that the temptation to dominate the weaker nature is the natural line of least resistance. And when there is added to this also the natural instinct of protection and care for the weaker friend, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep the relation-

ship wholesome with enough give-and-take to keep each in poise. Even if there is mutual contentment, selfishness is likely to be developed in the stronger friend, then an absorbing devotion in the weaker one, and finally a narrowing relationship.

SATELLITES OR COMRADES

There are times also in the friendships of some girls when their perfectly normal desire to idealize an appealing personality slides into an abnormal experience known in the vernacular of college girls as a "crush." This abnormal friendship has at its core a profound emotional element. Two girls are swept off their feet by the intense feeling they have for each other. The relation always seems to them to be exalted to a high plane unlike any relation they have ever had with other girls. All other friends seem commonplace and

cold in comparison with this relationship. All time spent with others is begrudged and the friendship must be enjoyed alone, not in the company of other friends. A keen-eyed, jealous spirit develops which is dependent upon a constant demonstration of affection, yet remains unsatisfied.

These frantic friendships usually are found between an older and younger girl, or a stronger and weaker personality. As time goes, the unmistakable earmarks of unwholesomeness appear. One becomes the satellite of the other. One girl limits the development of the other, and the result of this emotional strain usually undermines the nervous system of the weaker girl, and may result in nervous hysteria or prostration. It requires much honest thinking and good sense to face facts, because at the beginning there is much that is very fine in the relation, and

there is usually a lofty desire to help each other and to sacrifice one's self constantly for the supposed good of the other.

The reaction comes as a matter of course. In spite of the exalted sense of responsibility for each other and the willing thraldom, their neglected relatives and other friends do not see it in the same rosy light. Then, too, the element of jealousy in their friendship waxes stronger, and the relationship becomes hectic. The stronger girl finds that the constant strain on her sympathies and the exacting demands of the friendship react on her naturally in impatience and indifference, and the weaker girl is so unnerved that she is likely to lose her equilibrium. Her center of control has been taken away and a wrecked friendship is the result.

It is very difficult to restore this friendship to a normal plane of unselfish com-

radeship without a severe struggle that may involve months of suffering. Sometimes one of the friends becomes engaged to be married, and then the relation usually becomes commonplace. Or the stronger girl may be led by her conscience, or her experience with the nervous debility and emotional uncontrol of her friend, to see the wrong of dominating the personality of the one she loves. If God is not at the center of her life, it is probable that the relation will have to be cut off entirely. If she is a Christian at heart she will see that she is taking the adoration of her friend's heart to which God alone has the right, and will do all in her power to help the weaker one to stand on her own feet and to allow other friends and interests to come into her life. The weaker girl is very seldom able to come to herself, unless another strong

friend helps her to find her equilibrium. It is possible, however, for the two friends to dedicate the life of their affections to the daily control of Jesus Christ, and to be given a love "that seeketh not its own," that which issues in self-denial and sacrifice, subordinating joy in each other to the claims of duty and service.

It often happens, also, when a girl has lived on for years without forming any close friendships, that the pent-up affections of her heart sweep away her self-control when she does take a friend into her life. We are so made that we must have outlet for that capacity for love that God has given every girl. We cannot dam it up without its leaping over bounds sooner or later.

One of the chief reasons why we are led so easily into the intense experiences of friendship lies in the hunger of every

heart for satisfaction. As Dr. Richard C. Cabot reminds us: "The Christian law is that human beings are made to be perpetually unsatisfied and ought to be so. All affection has, and ought to have, in it this perpetual hunger and unsatisfied element, and it is just as true of those happily married and fortunate in their affections as of any one else. St. Augustine meant this when he said, 'Thou madest us for Thyself, and our soul is restless until it shall repose in Thee.' We have a longing for God that is never satisfied on earth, and all forms of affection, both mental and physical, . . . are sacred, or can be made so because they are the unsatisfied attempt at the expression of our eternal longing for God." [1]

[1] R. C. Cabot, *Christian Approach to Social Morality*, p. 44.

SELF-CONTROL

There is still one other test that we should apply to ourselves in all our friendships: humility in the use of our personal influence and power. There is a certain exhilaration that thrills every girl as she becomes conscious of her powers to attract and influence. Some are very self-conscious of their power of personality and imagine that every one is likely to come under the spell of their magnetism if they choose to use it. As one girl put it complacently, "All I have to do is to whistle and people come." These girls imagine that they are unique in this, and, therefore, from a false sense of their need for safeguarding their much-to-be-desired affections, they assume a general attitude of indifference and inaccessibility toward those with whom they

mingle, and often become ruthless and selfish in their attitude. They are generally girls who have much to give to others, but create such an atmosphere of constraint that they lose through pride the richness of friendship, and find it easy to yield to a snobbish spirit of exclusiveness. Such girls little realize how they hurt and baffle the lives of their friends toward whom they feel no sense of responsibility. There is nothing that more quickly hardens the life than this exaggerated and unconsecrated sense of power.

Consciousness of power to attract, unless consecrated, is likely sooner or later to result in the misuse of that power just for the pleasure of exerting it. A certain girl in a college sorority was voted the "class beauty" by her fellow seniors. She became self-conscious of her power

to attract and influence the college men who called at the house. She wound them, metaphorically, around her little finger and rejoiced secretly over every evidence of her control over them. One man alone seemed to be indifferent to her; he was engaged to her best friend. Her power was such an interesting instrument that she resolved to see if even this man would feel its influence. The days went on until one night she woke with a start to realize that she had more influence over this man than the girl friend to whom he was engaged. "I did not want him for myself," she confessed, "and I would not have hurt my friend for the world. I was just trying to see how much power I had. What can I do to make it right with my friend?" There was only one thing to be done, to own up the truth to the friend she had robbed

and to the man she had played with, and to confess to God the misuse of her power and her great need of his control. But in spite of squaring herself at last with her conscience, it was not easy to repair the havoc that had been wrought.

Many a girl has consciously used her power over her men friends with no thought of her moral responsibility toward them. In thoughtlessness, she uses her power over the brother of another girl when she would resent having her own brothers influenced in the same way. The power God has given girls toward influencing their boy friends is one of the most wonderful gifts of life if it is held in humility and with a sense of the sacredness of the responsibility to put strength and not weakness into a boy's life. Every boy friend that a girl holds up to his best is either the brother or the

lover of some other girl; and other girls are influencing the ideals of her brother or the one who will be her lover. The thought ought to make a girl want to do for others what she wants others to do for her.

This power of personality, which we all have to a greater or less degree, in spite of all its dangers, has been given us in trust, not to be buried in the earth as the man in the parable hid his talent, but to be used to the full for the help of others under the guidance and control of God's Spirit. There are many friends who are in a losing fight with life and who need the strength that we have to give. Often it takes all the power we possess to hold to the right some storm-stressed friend. There are all the others, too, who depend upon our strength for the daily courage to face tasks. Our

friendly trust and encouragement create a new ability in our friends to achieve what they could not accomplish without our aid. The very thought of us may hold them true to ideals, or it may weaken their powers of resistance: therefore, we dare not be proud or selfish in the use of our personal influence.

VI

THE INADEQUACY OF THE "SOCIAL SPIRIT"

And now I will point out to you a way of life which transcends all others. If I can speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but am destitute of Love, I have but become a loud-sounding trumpet or a clanging cymbal. If I possess the gift of prophecy and am versed in all mysteries and all knowledge, and have such absolute faith that I can remove mountains, but am destitute of Love, I am nothing. And if I distribute all my possessions to the poor, and give up my body to be burned, but am destitute of Love ; it profits me nothing.

Words of St. Paul (*Weymouth translation*)

VI

The Inadequacy of the "Social Spirit"

There are those who assure us that most of our difficulties in friendship would vanish if we applied the "social spirit" impartially to every one alike and were friendly to all, but personally related to none: that intimacy is an undesirable form of selfishness. Such teaching blurs the distinction between friendliness and friendship and fails altogether to reckon with the creative power of a personal love which makes two people kin.

The social spirit that applies the law of love conscientiously to those about us is a great safeguard against the temptation to take for ourselves God's place in a life. And yet the social spirit cannot be applied impersonally and satisfy any one.

Our spirits must find kindred spirits. We were made for friendships.

> "The love of all
> Is but a small thing to the love of one.
> You bid a hungry child be satisfied
> With a heritage of many cornfields; nay,
> He says he's hungry — he would rather have
> That little barley cake you keep from him
> While reckoning up his harvests." [1]

Perhaps the commonest illustration of this is found in the family relationships of many of us. The family is the first social group to which we owe allegiance. Blood, common standards of living, ideals, education, and years of intimate living together would seem to make the family an adequate outlet for a girl's affections; and it would be, in a large measure, if parents and brothers and sisters were transformed from family into friends. But there are many girls who have found

[1] Mrs. E. B. Browning, *Aurora Leigh*.

that merely living in one's family does not necessarily mean a comradeship in spirit. Even here friendship cannot be counted upon without paying the price. It can be built up only by observing the same laws of friendship that bring others close to us. A family that takes it for granted that a girl ought to find her joy and delight in the family, just because it is her family, is likely to be disappointed and to miss the mark of God's purpose.

It is a pity that so often in modern days many families fail to realize their obligations to the cause of friendship, and have not that crowning gift to offer one another. Happy, indeed, is that girl who has had it all her life in her own home! The discontent of countless girls, who are more likely to live with their families after growing up than are their brothers, would largely cease if the members of

the family were willing to pay the price of friendship with one another and cast out the spirit of jealousy and self-centeredness which they exalt as a virtue, because they are blind to this elemental need of every life.

Marriage, often accepted as a refuge, solves this problem for some girls, but there are many who find it possible to escape from a home life, which seems a bondage, only by going to work and living where they can be free to cultivate friendships and live their own lives. The very ease with which so many American girls are able to do this makes it necessary that we should examine our motives and see whether we are neglecting our God-given responsibilities toward our families, and whether we have done our full part in bringing about the transformation of family into friends. We dare

not be so selfish in our love for friends outside the family that we fail to be true to the first trust that God gave us.

The family social unit has been built up with untold cost through the centuries. It is being tested to-day in our national life as never before. If it is to survive as an institution, every girl will have to do her full part to make the ideal a reality by adding to the bond of blood the priceless gift of a friendship that will stand all tests. It is worth all that it may cost to be loyal to family ties.

VII

GOD AT THE CENTER

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.

WORDS OF JESUS CHRIST

Because Christ is in a relation of spiritual continuity with "the least of these" and with each of us who feeds Him or gives Him drink, all the good-will which we put out is transmitted to Christ and to the Father of us all. . . . Furthermore, unless we think of our own personality in such a relation to Infinite Personality, as I have hinted, I do not see how any sociable human being can bear without intolerable humiliation the volume of affection and gratitude that is poured out on him. In practice one explains it, one makes it sweet and sane only by passing it on. No human being can support the full weight and impact of another human being's love. It turns to absurdities and blasphemies unless it can pass through us to God.

R. C. CABOT, *What Men Live By*, p. 185

VII

God at the Center

In all our human relationships the secret of lasting peace is selflessness; for as soon as we assert ourselves willfully we are likely to sin against God and thereby lose that sense of inner peace without which we could find no real value in life. Sin often consists in doing what we please instead of doing what we ought; and it is only by obeying this sense of conscience and duty in our hearts that we can meet the tests of true friendship. There are some of us who are undoubtedly thinking that all these tests are so severe that very few of us can apply them without plunging ourselves into difficulties. This is probably true, but I can only say that the difficulties of testing our-

selves now in our youth are less than they will be later.

Just here we need to connect the whole subject of friendship with our relationship to God, who, through the life of Jesus Christ, reveals Himself as the great Friend of our hearts. Practically all of our troubles with human friendships would vanish if in the beginning we consciously and deliberately made Jesus Christ the center of our affection, giving to Him the foremost place. Whoever has the foremost place in our hearts controls, not only our affections, but our wills. Then it is easy and natural to obey just as the flower bends toward the sun in which it delights. We all bow down to some one. Mary Lyon once said that there were but three kinds of people in the world: the people who do their own wills; the people who do the wills of other people; and the

people who do the will of God. In no place are we more conscious of this than in the realm of friendships. We find our own wills driven by desires and the law of attraction strong; we seem swayed hither and thither, the victims of our desires and the desires of others. Our inherent self-control seems to condition our victory or defeat. It surely does, so far as human strength goes. It would not go far with most of us, however, if there was no way to reinforce our strength so as to find peace and poise. The secret is told us by the Great Friend of our life who said, "Not my will but Thine be done," and who always did his Father's will. It is He who says, "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me."

Just here many of us are honestly troubled. We know that Jesus Christ

gave as the great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," but we do not know *how* to obey it. If we speak out the truth we have to own that we do not find a deep emotion of love for God in our hearts that measures up to that which we feel for human friends. It all seems like such a hopelessly long leap from daily affairs.

Perhaps we shall get help if we follow the suggestion that Dr. Cabot works out so convincingly in his book [1] where he shows us that we love God, not only through worship and prayer when we think of Him in all his holiness and power and where his Spirit brings Him near, but we also love God through work and beauty and play. "I have made this little handkerchief for you," a friend wrote, "and

[1] R. C. Cabot, *What Men Live By*.

so much love and thought of you has gone into the stitches." Thus work is made a sacrament by love. Let us learn to love God through the exhilaration of work, through faithfulness where only He sees — in little things, in secret, hidden service. Let us love Him, too, through the ecstasy of color, of music, of laughter, and the thousand beauties of nature; through the beauty of holiness and exquisite cleanness and purity. Let us be stirred, too, with the love of God through the great hymns of praise and the quiet peace of the starry night.

As the love of God grows within us and holds us with its wonder and satisfying power, we find that our friendships are kept sweet and strong. For all that we love in our friends is but a faint reflection of what we love in God. And in Jesus Christ, the perfect expression of

God in human life, we find the ideal for all our human friendships. To work out this ideal we must make his will and purpose supreme in our hearts, and subordinate all our will and our loves to his control. In this way an inner poise and balance come to us so that our friendships are hallowed and purified by his love. Only in this way can all the tests of friendship be met continually. I also become free, and dare to love all others because his love comes first.

This secret of freedom in love is well summed up in Phillips Brooks's vigorous words: "If the much beloved man can look up and demand the love of God; if, catching sight of that, he can crave it and covet it infinitely above all other love; if, laying hold of its great freedom, he can make it his and knows that he loves God and knows that God loves him, —

then he is free. Then let him come back and take into a glowing heart the warmest admiration and affection of his brother; let him walk the earth with hosts of friends, the heaven that he carries in his heart preserves him. They cannot make him conceited, for he who lives with God must be humble. They cannot drown his self-hood, for the God he loves and serves is always laying upon him his own personal duties, and bringing the soul before its own judgment seat every day. He who knows that God loves and honors him may freely take all other love and honor, however abundant they may be, and he will get no harm. All that is weak and foolish and unworthy in them, he will cast aside; all that is worthy he will take worthily."[1]

Without this poise in God, there are

[1] Phillips Brooks, *How to Abound.*

only two alternatives possible when we feel the power of friendship swaying us. It may be the path of self-indulgence, following the line of least resistance and finding ourselves the prey to our desires. When we follow this path, we find that our desires react upon us and cease to appeal to us, and that the complete giving up of ourselves to love selfishly has cheapened it for us. Or it may be the path of self-restraint, by which we refuse to yield to the power of love. Such repression means limitation of life and we should tend to turn in upon ourselves. We should also be likely to overleap the bounds some time, unless we become atrophied and lose our power to love deeply. Either epicurean self-indulgence or stoical self-restraint is the possible path for the life that is not controlled by God. Of the two, stoicism is far prefer-

able; but at best it is only refined paganism.

It is difficult to see how any girl who has realized the need of the controlling power of God in her life could form her most intimate friendships with those for whom the deepest things in her life have no meaning. It is true that close comradeships are possible between those who have kindred tastes; as when music or art, athletics or literature, or interest in a common work, is the bond. When, however, one's personal and spiritual needs are involved, there is a craving for sympathy and understanding that can be satisfied only when two friends are one in ideals and motives; and at that point one touches the life of the spirit that lies beyond common tastes. There is a wealth of experience back of that sentence of Hugh Black, in which he observes: "The

only permanent severance of heart comes through lack of a common spiritual footing. If one soul goes up to the mountain-top and the other stays down among the shadows, if the two have not the same high thoughts, and pure desires, and ideals of service, they cannot remain together except in form."

"What good soever in thy heart or mind
Doth yet no higher source nor fountain own
Than thine own self, nor bow to other throne,
Suspect and fear; although therein thou find
High purpose to go forth and bless thy kind,
Or in the awful temple of thy soul
To worship what is loveliest, and control
The ill within, and by strong laws to bind.
Good is of God — no good is therefore sure,
Which has dared wander from its source away:
Laws without sanction will not long endure,
Love will grow faint and fainter day by day,
And Beauty from the straight path will allure,
And weakening first will afterward betray." [1]

[1] *Archbishop Trench.*

VIII

THE URGE AND POWER OF FRIENDSHIP

Alter? when the hills do.
Falter? when the sun
Question if his glory
Be the perfect one.

Surfeit? when the daffodil
Doth of the dew:
Even as herself, O friend!
I will of you!

The Poems of EMILY DICKINSON.
Published by Little, Brown & Co., Boston.

VIII

The Urge and Power of Friendship

Men have written volumes on the power of friendship and yet have not said half. It is God's most wonderful way of leading us on to achievement and fullness of life. Each one of us contributes constantly to others. It may be courage, truthfulness, humor, sympathy, or it may be prejudice, cynicism, deceit; and we cannot be with our friends without feeling such influences continually.

> "You showed me something separate from yourself,
> Beyond you; and I bore to take it in
> And let it draw me." [1]

When a girl consecrates a friend in her heart, she opens her life to all the

[1] Mrs. E. B. Browning, *Aurora Leigh.*

creative power of that friendship and she must be sure, oh, so sure, that that power is reinforcing her and not debilitating her. This is why our Lord said so repeatedly, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another *as* I have loved you."

Just here we may well ask what are some of the ways in which we feel his love and should find the same love in our human friends. There are many ways, but we will speak only of three. In the first place, we ought to find a purifying power in our friendships. How many times we have whispered to ourselves our fear lest our friends should cease to love us if they really knew how far short we came in our unworthiness; and how we pray and strive to true up our lives so that we may be worthy. It is this purifying power of friendship that calls out our deepest love.

"I thought his love would weaken
As more and more He knew me;
But it burneth like a beacon
And its light and heat go through me;—
And I ever hear Him say
As He goes along his way,
Silly sheep, oh, do come near me—
My sheep should never fear me,
I am the shepherd true." [1]

"I should have given up the fight long ago," a friend wrote, "but I could not disappoint your love. It has purified my life as nothing else." Not long ago a stalwart college fellow said to a friend, "If you want to know what's kept me straight, it's this"; and here he took from his inner pocket a much-worn letter. "That's from a young woman who was my Sunday-school teacher before I came to college, and she wrote me this when I decided to be a church member. She thinks I'm all true, and I would n't

[1] Faber.

fail her for anything." There are so many who struggle in vain with besetting sins and are never delivered until some friend in the name of Christ, by the purifying power of love, supplies the motive that makes the moral victory not only possible but easy.

A true friendship also is creative in its power. It calls out powers in us that we scarcely knew were there. We almost have to pinch ourselves to realize that we are the same persons that we were a year ago. We achieve easily the things that would have been impossible without the confidence and love of our friends. The alchemy of friendship is a mystery, but a glorious fact. Something of joy and power which would not have been possible otherwise is called forth. To be able to reproduce in other lives the strength and beauty of our own is the biggest com-

pensation of life, and the way in which we complete our own personalities.

Friendship inspires us, too, with the power of sacrifice and unselfishness. We have only to recall the hours we have spent in what we should call drudgery were it not for a friend. Every true friend makes us forget ourselves and lifts us into a new life. We even deny that our selflessness is sacrifice, and say, as one girl did recently, "Why! it 's no sacrifice, I love to do it for her; it 's my pleasure." Perhaps in no way can we appreciate so clearly the sacrifice of the love of God, who "so loved that He gave," as through our experiences in unselfish giving to our friends. In this way we come to know the heart of God. If friendship brought us nothing but this, it would be worth the whole of life to us.

IX

THE PAIN AND COST

Measure thy life by loss instead of gain;
Not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice;
And whoso suffers most hath most to give.
. . . . . .
How poor were earth if all its martyrdoms,
If all its struggling sighs of sacrifice
Were swept away, and all were satiate-smooth;
If this were such a heaven of soul and sense
As some have dreamed of; — and we human still.
Nay we were fashioned not for perfect peace
In this world, howsoever in the next:
And what we win and hold is through some strife.

ELEANOR HAMILTON KING, *The Sermon in the Hospital*

IX

The Pain and Cost

Through friendship we learn not only the joy of sacrifice, but the pain of sacrifice as well. There are times when the path of true love does not run smoothly, and we suffer keenly. The closer our friends come to us, the more likely we are to feel sensitively what we should not even notice in others. Sometimes pain comes because we fail to recognize the peculiarities of temperament in one another and adjust ourselves to them. Our friends are likely to be very different from us, for we are usually attracted by our opposites; but temperamental attraction does not always bring with it sympathetic understanding of our friend who is unlike us. It takes time

before we love deeply enough to become mindful of our different ways of thinking and doing, and before we allow our friends to be themselves. This may be a painful process.

Two girls were chums at college. One was a systematic, deliberate soul who pegged away steadily at her tasks. If she had a theme to write, she worked patiently at it, sentence by sentence, finishing it calmly a day or so before it was due. Her friend was nervous and dreamy and seemed never to be troubled by classroom specters until, suddenly seized by a fit of inspiration, she would spend long, feverish hours in writing, and emerge with a brilliant piece of work just in time to hand it in. It took all the love they had for each other to be patient with each other's temperament. Each felt it her duty to make the other

over, and the pain of their unsuccessful attempts to do this nearly wrecked their friendship. It was only when each decided to love the other just as she was and to accept the situation that peace reigned. It takes an unfailing sense of humor to appreciate the things in which we differ, and trust the oneness underneath it all.

Friends of equal strength of mind and will are more likely to suffer because of one another than when one nature is weaker. The friendship of strong natures will cost much daily strain before it is rooted in steadfastness, but it has elements of permanency and power which the more restful relation of a strong and weak friend lacks, the peace of which may be due to an unconscious domination of the will, which is never satisfying in the end.

There are some girls with great capacities for friendship whose wills are so steadily fixed that they find it difficult to yield to the discipline of a friendship with a strong nature. They usually drive their friends tandem. Their path in life is marked by monuments to a yearly conquest of one friend after another. Each friendship in turn came to an untimely end because their complete acquiescence had become boresome or because it was easier to make another conquest than to pay the price of a disciplined life. Such a girl usually pursues her path of victory blissfully unconscious of the pain she is inflicting upon her discarded friends. Nothing but the greater power of a friendship with God can control and cure the pain that such friends cause.

Our very expectation that our friends shall always understand us perfectly is

a cause of more pain than our friends know; and we suffer the more just because they do not know that they are hurting. We need to bring our good sense to the rescue, and remind ourselves that, even though our hearts are open to one another, no one but God can see all that is in them. We cannot expect divinity of our friends even though our love would delight to crown them with a halo.

There are times also in the experience of most of us when our hearts are full of sincere love for some one who does not respond to it; or we often discover in ourselves a seeming inability to respond to the love of others for us. This is one of the mysteries of life which an ancient Japanese poet discerned in the words: —

"There is on earth a thing more bootless still
Than to write figures on a running stream:
And that thing is (believe me if you will)
To dream of one who ne'er of you doth dream."

There are, however, certain conditions which may explain some of these experiences. Our love may be self-seeking and so obtrusive that it causes a perfectly natural reaction of withdrawal and resistance in the one we love. If we are selfish in our love for others, or if we have presumed in claiming love from them, we shall find the suffering that ensues a purifying and refining fire. As we go through it we shall be helped if we remember that it is not alone in the realm of friendship that we find our desires baffled. Some of us find long periods when our most honest search for truth seems unrequited; it lures us on, but we seem unable to embrace it. Other times we suffer keenly in our yearning to achieve some moral ideal that we love and want to possess for our very own, and yet, in spite of tears and prayers in the night,

we fall short of it. We are like a little East Side girl with an artist's spirit, who was found copying with cheap crayons some pansies on a picture-card. A woman saw her and gave her some real pansies to draw — the first the child had ever seen. She fell to work with joy, but later was found sobbing as though her heart would break, crying out, in the midst of her sobs, "Oh, I can never, never put the velvet on!" We catch sight of an ideal, — it may be in a person, in a thought, or in our conscience toward God, — and with all our heart's love and eagerness, we want to possess that friend, that truth, that Christ ideal, and we fall back in pain and disappointment. Is there any meaning in this for us? Yes; some of the greatest gifts in life come to us through such an experience. Perhaps we were not worthy of

that friendship that we long for and we find in this consciousness a spur to become worthy of the ideal we hold; the seeing truth "through a glass darkly" urges us on to greater concentration of mind, that we may know fully; and the "hunger and thirst after righteousness" bring us at last into the very presence of God. These experiences in friendship should only lead us into greater loyalty to the ideal of friendship. Professor Royce, in his discussion of loyalty for lost causes, says: "In such cases, the cause comes to be idealized through its very failure to win temporary and visible success. The result for loyalty may be vast." And again: "Loyalty is never raised to its highest levels without such grief. . . . One begins, when one serves lost causes, to discover that, in some sense, one ought to devote one's high-

est loyalty precisely to the causes that are too good to be visibly realized at any one moment of this poor, wretched, fleeting time-world in which we see and touch and find mere things, mere sensations, mere feelings of the moment." [1] It was said of our Lord, "He came to his own, and they who were his own received Him not." Perhaps it is only by some such experience that we can understand a little of what He suffered for us, his friends, and so come really to know and love Him.

It is a little more difficult to know what to do when we find ourselves unable to respond to the sincere love of others. Most of us are so made that we prefer to pursue love to being pursued by it. The love that is given us without our seeking may seem to be an unwarranted intrusion

[1] Josiah Royce, *Philosophy of Loyalty*, pp. 280, 284.

into our inner temple, and the door shuts instinctively. Or, we may be so occupied with our small circle of friends that we are pitifully blind to the love of those outside it. It takes time also to delve beneath the unattractive parts until we find something that calls out love. The world is so full of people that appeal to us outwardly and inwardly in many ways that we do not care to take the time to have a friendship based on one or two points in common when on more important points there could never be comradeship. And we are afraid of venturing at all lest an unfair advantage may be taken. All this is good reasoning for most of us, but we need to guard lest in justifying ourselves we fail to see our need for more of that spirit of Jesus Christ which made Him the accessible friend of any one who needed Him. Sometimes an experience

opens our eyes and makes us see our need for more loving discernment. Two girls were teachers in the same school, one with a brilliant experience of five years, the other, just beginning. The heart of the younger teacher reached out to the other in a sincere desire for friendship. But the brilliant girl was well established, with the usual host of friends that satisfied her, and besides she saw nothing attractive in the younger teacher. Her social background, her tastes and experience in life could contribute nothing to her, so the timid overtures met no response and were soon forgotten. Late in the year the younger teacher died suddenly, and her mother came from a distant State. In gathering up her daughter's things she found a private diary for the year, which she brought to the brilliant girl, saying, "This should be yours, it is

full of you." As she looked through the pages she saw there the heart of the girl who had embodied her as an ideal and who in humility and love and struggle was trying so hard to be made more worthy to measure up to the ideal of the one she loved, although she knew there could never be a friendship but only an ideal for her. As the teacher closed the diary, she found her heart filled with a love she had never thought possible for the lonely girl whose real heart she had never known and whose life she might have ministered unto. "I shall never dare again," she said, "to treat irreverently any sincere love of an honest heart that comes to me, even though I cannot give all that is asked." We need to guard lest there be times when the suggestion Hugh Black makes should be true of us, when he says: "It may not be our fault that

we cannot respond to the offer of friendship or love, but it is our misfortune. The secret is revealed to the other and hid from us. The gain is to the other and the loss is to us. The miracle is the love, and to the lover comes the wonder of it, and the joy."

And what of the heartache that comes when our friends fail to come up to our ideals? This is a bitter blow, due sometimes to our unreasonable expectations. Our friends are really just as human as we are, and if we ever have cause to go to God in humiliation and confession because of our weakness, surely our friends are equally mortal, and it is a shame ever to allow ourselves to be disappointed in a friend.

It is here that we need to remember the comfort of the words, "He restoreth my soul," and, in the spirit of our

Master, bear one another's burdens and restore the spirit of the friend who may have stumbled. We need the kind of love that the small boy described when he said, "A friend is one who knows all about you, and loves you just the same"; and, we might well add, "perhaps yet more!"

Sometimes this love is put to a severe test when a friend fails us in spite of all our love and faithful dealing. The intimacy of years may be wiped out by some act of disloyalty or insincerity, and pride or blindness may prevent an honest facing of the difficulty. At such times we should wait in patience and in an attitude of willingness to restore the relationship as soon as there can be truthfulness and a sincere desire to re-create the ideal: and we must work with all our hearts to bring this about.

"Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken." [1]

The power of a love that is a continuous will to be true to a friend and to hold that friend true is likely to be rewarded in the end, though there may be a long period when comradeship is impossible. Especially will this be so if the human love be reinforced through intercession, by the very constraining love of God. If we truly love enough to seek God's help in bringing our friend back into a new and true understanding, we shall, without doubt, in the end, find that which we seek.

[1] Shakespeare, Sonnet 116.

X

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING A FRIEND

Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

X

The Responsibility of Being a Friend

The business of being a friend is a responsibility that no one may shirk without suffering irreparable loss. We dare not take it lightly without becoming artificial; we cannot look upon it merely as our pleasure, without being emotional sentimentalists; and we cannot discard it as something that would interfere with our pet theory of individualism, or a fancied love of the impersonal, without turning our tree of life into juiceless pith. The saving grace lies in the fact that most of us are normal human beings, and we know that we cannot live a sane, well-balanced life without love issuing in friendships. At bottom we all want friends and love, and we ought not to be ashamed to

own it. The fact, also, that we must have comradeship in work and play ought to make us responsible friends. We are so dependent upon our friends in what we do and in what we enjoy that we are in honor bound to give "a square deal."

Moreover, we dare not dodge this business of being a friend, for it helps us to know God. One of the friends of Jesus Christ wrote, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot love God whom he hath not seen"; and we all know well how subtle and precise the relation seems to be in that, wherever we deliberately restrain the spirit of love, our love for God seems to shrink. On the other hand, a feeling of responsibility for some friend will bring us more intimately near to God. So all the friends that are sent us become a sacred trust. In fact, they are so much of a trust that we

scarcely dare choose them for ourselves: we grow fearful of making mistakes, and find that it is usually safer to let God bring them to us unsought.

The duty of being a friend should not be conditioned by the amount of emotion we find in our hearts. Let us never stint the gift of friendship by measuring it only by our feelings of love; we must measure it also by our purpose and will to love. In the end our feelings must be glorified and consecrated by our will, which lifts friendship above the fickle waverings of desire. If we all learned to square our conduct by our wills and purposes, and not with our feelings, we should avoid many of the snags that come in the path of our love.

The business of being a friend ought to be a joyous business. There 's no virtue in holding back the expression of the

delight that we find in our friends. In the shelter of their presence we can be buoyant and care-free and find wings for our souls. No friendship has too much of real joy in it. The danger is that we should be too prosaic and matter of fact and fall back on the thought, "she knows I love her," as an excuse for not showing the joy we feel. The zest of reading books with an appreciative friend, listening to music, tramping along a country road, discovering new pleasure in common tastes, mutual friends, and daily experiences, the fun of surprising a friend with something that will give pleasure, —in fact, just the solid enjoyment of those whom we love is a dear responsibility which we all need to fulfill better than we do.

There are also times in every friendship when we owe the duty of respon-

siveness and an understanding sympathy for the need of our friends. If they cannot feel our sincere interest in the difficulties they are meeting, and if they miss our friendly counsel at times when they are in danger of making mistakes, we have failed in being true to the business of friendship. It is "the friend in need" who proves to be "the friend indeed." There may be times when it will cost much to be true to a friend in difficulties, but our loyalty to the responsibility we undertook when we began the friendship is part of our very moral integrity and we must be true to our friends for the sake of being true to ourselves. It is not alone, however, in the times of deep need, but in the wear and tear of everyday life that we need to show that discerning sympathy which proves that we do understand. As we look back over

years of intimacy, it is generally some tiny service that came when we were weary or discouraged or some word of appreciation that forged the chain of friendship.

Every true friendship has the glow of eternity on it. As we ourselves hope for eternal life, so we find that our friend, being truly a part of our larger life, cannot be detached from us. If love is one of the great "ends" of life and the love of God and the love of our neighbor are bound up together, then our friendships point beyond our mortal life as all "ends" should, and we need to live with our friends in "the power of an endless life." Therefore, we owe our friends the duty of prayer, including them in the yearnings and petitions of our hearts in the presence of God. In this way our desires grow more unselfish and we learn

to say "*Our* Father" with a deeper meaning and to release new energies until the God who is love shall possess the spirits of all his children with his love.

It was on these methods of friendship that Jesus Christ staked the extension of his kingdom. He gathered about Him as his life-work a group of friends into whom He poured all the richness of his teaching and spirit. And He left this world in the quiet confidence that his friends would have his friendly spirit toward other friends, so that by the very contagion of spirit and personality they might grow into his character. This contagion of life is possible only through friendship; and so it is that there is nothing more worth living for.

There is nothing this old world needs more! It is waiting for a wider application of the method of Jesus to bring in a

new era where friendly people dwell together in peace. The ties of friendship are more potent in fashioning the wills of individuals than the bonds of blood. One never knows where the life of love will lead. It ignores differences of race and makes the whole world kin, but depends on the degree to which we are accessible and under the sway of the friendly spirit. We often find that we have sympathy and interest in an entire nation if we have as a close friend one member of that nation. Even an unattractive, grimy city will cease to trouble us if it is the home of some one dear to us. The peace of the world will in the end depend upon our capacity for friendship and willingness to use it.

It is not easy to measure up to the ideals of friendship: we come short so pitifully in our everyday life with our

friends, yet there is something in us that urges us on. Let us not shrink from a heroic application of the vital principles we have been discussing, for friendship is worth to us all that it costs and much more.

According to our varied capacities we should make the vocation of friendship a chief concern of life until, by the rich experiences we have with our friends, we are fitted to appreciate in a little way the friendship of Jesus Christ. The measure and method of his love for us is to be the measure and method of our love for our friends.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind."

"And this is my commandment, that ye love one another *even as I have loved you.*"

Being a Friend

"Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you."

All the reinforcement of God himself awaits us in our determination to obey these divine commands. Friendship with God and friendship with one another — a privilege for every one of us that has a willing heart! Let us make the business of being a friend the supreme business of our life.

THE END

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